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AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
EARTHQUAKE
WHICH
DESTROYED THE CITY OF LISBON,

ON THE FIRST OF NOVEMBER, 1755;

And the Appearance of the City previous to that Calamity :

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE
GREAT PICTURE
OF THE
EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON,

NOW EXHIBITING AT THE
LYCEUM, STRAND.

THE LANDSCAPE PAINTED BY C. J. PUGH;
THE FIGURES BY R. K. PORTER.

*Selected from the London Gazette, private Letters, and other Documents,
of the Year 1755.*

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PRINTED BY W. GLENDINNING, N° 25, HATTON GARDEN.

Price Sixpence.

1873, May 22.
The Bequest of
Hon. James Savage,
of Boston.
(H. U. 1803.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAINTING.

This Picture exhibits the awful and sublime effects of the Earthquake, which destroyed Lisbon, on the 1st of November, 1755.

On ascending the platform you see, to the left hand, the Tagus in violent agitation, breaking over the Quay and Light-house: various public buildings are tumbling from the dreadful shock, and sulphuric flames are bursting from every quarter of the City. In the centre is the Cathedral, sinking amidst a conflagration which totally destroyed it; together with edifices the most magnificent. On the hill, directly over the fire, stands the Castle, of moorish architecture. The fore-ground presents various groups of the distracted inhabitants, flying for safety from the terror of the scene. To the right is the Aquaduct, and Military Square.

EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON,

1ST OF NOVEMBER, 1755.

To convey an Idea of the vast Devastation occasioned by this Earthquake, the following Account of Lisbon, previous to that terrible Calamity, may not prove unacceptable.

LISBON, the capital of Portugal, and a city of the most extensive trade in Europe, except London and Amsterdam, was situated on the northern bank of the Tagus. It stood on seven hills; and when viewed from the river, or the eastern shore, afforded a fine prospect; the buildings winding with the Tagus and rising gradually from it up the hills. Nor was the prospect less entertaining from the city, where was seen a river, three miles over, filled with ships of almost every nation in Europe: and be-

yond it a delightful country, intermixed with towns and villages. The city, which was about six miles long, was surrounded by a single wall, on which were seventy-seven antique towers, of no great strength: on the river-side the wall had twenty-six gates, and on the land-side seventeen.

The city had also a castle; a strong ancient fabric, that stood on one of the highest hills, and was chiefly remarkable for its largeness, and its being built in the moorish taste. The houses of the nobility were elegantly built with stone, had large gardens, and made a beautiful and stately appearance; but most of those belonging to the common people, were old and mean: however those that had been re-built made a better appearance. The city had forty parish churches, besides the cathedral, which, standing on one of the highest hills, had, at a distance, a grand appearance: it was a heavy gothic structure, and richly adorned within. This city contained twenty-five monasteries; eighteen nunneries, besides about one hundred and thirty of laies, who had chapels, and kept priests to officiate in them. There were several large hospitals; and

the royal palace afforded a magnificent view on the banks of the river, from the windows of which might be seen large fleets of ships at anchor, and others perpetually sailing in and out of the spacious harbour. This palace formed one side of a square; the custom-house, corn and meat markets, &c. the others. In this square they had their bull-fights, at which all the nobility and gentry were present: and here was performed the infernal rites of those who were given up to be burnt, or rather roasted alive by the inquisition, which held its detested court in the fine square called Rosina.

The streets were exceedingly narrow, and some very steep: the harbour was capable of containing ten thousand sail of shipping, and the largest vessels might ride with safety in eighteen fathom water, before the palace: its entrance was defended by two forts; St. Julian, which is built on the shore, and opposite to it Terre Castle, which is erected on a bank, surrounded with water. Nature has also provided another defence, which is the Bar, very dangerous without the assistance of an experienced pilot. Nearer to the city there was a third fort,

called Terre de Belæn, which stood on a bank in the river, that is only accessible at low water.

From the above description a very distinct idea may be formed of Lisbon, as it appeared on the first of November, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five. On that fatal morning the sky was serene, and there was a perfect calm; when, at fifty-seven minutes past nine o'clock, a noise was heard rolling along the streets, like the rattling of coaches; at the same time the earth shook with a violent undulating motion. In an instant the whole city exhibited a scene of horror and dreadful confusion: humanity at recollection recoils; and I here bow with awe and reverence to that God, who preserved me and mine from the dreadful abyss. The large quay near the custom-house, piled up with goods which had been lately landed from the Brazil and India fleets, instantly sunk, and, dreadful to relate, with it about six hundred persons, who were standing on it, perished; and where it stood is now deep water. The people rushed into the streets, calling upon Heaven for mercy, and ran to escape the impending

ruin, by flying to one of the squares, or into the country. Horses and cattle became furious and ungovernable, broke the reins, and with their riders vainly flew from that destruction which appeared inevitable: many in these attempts were killed by the showers of tiles and stones, or crushed to death by the fall of tottering buildings. A crowd were in an instant pressing forward to the Terrera de Passa, the square by the king's palace, with the hope of getting on shipboard, when they as suddenly retreated, terrified by the sudden swell of the Tagus, which rose twenty or thirty feet, and as quickly retired, leaving vessels in six fathom water on the ground: but the sea presently after returned in a prodigious rolling wave; and this ebbing and flowing was repeated four several times, sinking some boats, and washing away all the timber, masts, casks, and other stores, out of the king's yard. The sea at the Bar broke feather white, as if agitated by a storm. The castle called Rugio, being in great danger from these tremendous swells, kept firing distress signal guns; whilst in the city the immense columns of dust, raised by falling buildings, so obscured the sun, that for some minutes it was

as dark as the blackest night: incessant shrieks assailed the ear, and agonizing pangs rent every breast. A dreadful pause ensued; the clouds of dust dispersed, and a momentary cessation succeeded, in which some embraced and congratulated each other with tears, while others lamented the loss of friends. Here the fond husband and affectionate wife mourned over their departed offspring; there the lover, with despair, viewed the mangled corse of her he fondly loved. Brothers kneeling and weeping at their sister's fate: where'er you turned the eye Death was viewed in all directions. Many escaped as if by miracle, and crawling out of the ruins, joined the rest. Some were seen clinging to the rafters and timbers of desolated houses, at a frightful height, and imploring assistance; and others mangled and dying, filled the air with groans and prayers. After a few moments a second shock put a stop to these congratulations, during which time the few scattered houses still standing, bent to and fro, like the mast of a ship in a storm. Congratulations were now turned to petitions for mercy, and when that was over, those who were still safe scrambled as fast as they were able over the ruins; but on their ap-

proaching the churches, found the highest cause for gratitude to the Supreme Being, for their preservation, while they were filled with horror, at seeing the multitudes wounded by the fall of the roofs of those spacious fabrics; the clergy running about over the ruins, to confess and absolve those who were still alive; and on all sides miserable objects groaning and expiring in agony. Soon after this there was a third violent shock, which obliged those who were endeavouring to escape from these accumulated scenes of misery, to lie down, or kneel, none being able to keep on their feet.

In the afternoon all the passages were stopped by a fire, which broke out in several distant parts at the same time; and at night the ruins of the city were all in a flame. This completed its destruction, and the ruin of its surviving inhabitants; for in the terror all persons were in, no attempt was made to stop it; and the wind being very high, it was communicated from one street to another, by the flakes of fire drove by the winds: it raged with great violence for eight days, and this in the principal and most thronged parts of the city. People fled into the fields half

naked: the fire consumed all sorts of merchandize, household goods, and wearing apparel. The court, the populace of the city, nuns, friars, all promiscuously lay together in the open fields, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, while the misery they suffered from cold and hunger is not to be expressed.

It is remarkable, that this fire continued burning so long, that on the sixteenth day after it began, the rubbish was so hot, as to set fire to the baskets in which it was carried. It was at first imagined, that these fires broke out of the earth; but however probable this supposition may appear, it does not seem to have been the case here; for the most authentic letters represent it as kindled by the fires lighted in the houses, and the large wax tapers in the churches, burning among the rubbish; or, as kindled by villainous incendiaries.

The English residents at Lisbon were preserved amidst this awful and wonderful scene, in a most astonishing and providential manner; for out of between four and five hundred, only twelve or fourteen, according to the largest

computation, perished; whilst the smallest statement of the Portuguese who perished, amounted to the number of forty thousand souls.

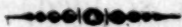
Abraham Castres, Esq. the British Envoy at the court of Lisbon, at the time of the Earthquake, in a letter published in the London Gazette, says, the King and Queen of Portugal, with their family, encamped with the nobility in the fields near Lisbon, all the royal palaces being destroyed: that the English Consul and family were saved, together with the Dutch Minister and family, while his friend, the Spanish Ambassador, was crushed under his door, as he attempted to make his escape into the street: that his house being large, together with a spacious garden, he was enabled to afford relief to numbers of poor miserable objects who applied to him for bread: that the King of Portugal's loss was immense, his whole city utterly destroyed, but who bore it with much firmness of mind; and of whom he observes, in an interview he had the honour of maintaining with him, said, "He owed great thanks to Providence for saving his and his family's lives." What money was saved out of the fire was so

blackened as to cause it to be specified, whether payments of any sort were to be made in black or bright money. The iron chests were the only things that saved the ready cash of many. As to household goods, they were all consumed, and some gentlemen were reduced to the want of every thing to keep them from the weather; for most escaped only in their undress and slippers. What chiefly contributed to the destruction of the city was, the narrowness of the streets. It is not to be expressed by human tongue how dreadful and awful it was to enter the city after the fire was abated; and looking upwards one was struck with terror in beholding frightful pyramids of ruined fronts, some inclining one way, some another: then, on the contrary, you beheld with horror dead bodies six or seven in a heap, half buried and half burnt, in the streets and squares. People bewailing their misfortunes, wringing their hands, and crying the world was at an end.

The mint, and treasury were the only public buildings left standing amidst the general wreck. All business consequently ceased, and the shocks were still frequent tho' comparatively nothing.

This earthquake was very generally felt all over Europe, at Oporto, at Cadiz, at Gibraltar, at Madeira. In Africa the earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe; and great part of the town of Algiers was destroyed. St. Ubes's, a sea-port town, twenty miles south of Lisbon, was swallowed up by it, and all its inhabitants perished. Not the least vestige of the city was left, or one person, to lament the loss of his kindred and friends.

In many places in Germany and Holland the effects of this earthquake were very perceptible. The agitation of the waters was also perceived in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland. Shocks were also felt of it in Scotland and Wales.



APPENDIX TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IT is observable, that in the year 1531, there was an earthquake at Lisbon, by which about 14000 houses were overthrown and 600 more were so terribly shattered, that they were ready to fall, and many of their churches were levelled with the ground; the like calamity happened to that city about 200 years before.

This earthquake made an awful impression on men's minds, and a general spirit of commiseration and benevolence pervaded all Europe;

amongst which, Great Britain was the first to set an example of humanity and public spirit; 30000l. in Portugal gold, and 20000l. in silver, were immediately sent to the relief of the unfortunate Portegueze; besides corn, flour, rice, beef, and all kinds of necessaries, the King of Spain also sent 40000 pistoles to Lisbon, and ordered the frontier towns to supply them with provisions; and throughout England a day was appointed for a general fast.

In the year 1783, an earthquake ruined great part of Italy, and Sicily; at Calabria, there perished 40000 people, mountains were levelled, and vallies formed in an instant; new rivers began to flow, and old streams were sunk into the earth and destroyed, plantations were removed from their situations, and hills carried to places distant; at Casal Nuovo, the Princess Gerace, and upwards of 4000 inhabitants lost their lives; at Scylla, by a furious wave, (said to have been boiling hot, and by which many people were alleged to have been scalded) which overflowed the land for three miles, and in its return swept off the strand a Prince and 2473 of his subjects; at Bagnara 3017, at Radicina and Palmi 6000, at Terra Nuovo 1400, these earthquakes (for there were several shocks) vented their greatest force, from the foot of those mountains of the Appenines, called Monte Dejo, Monte Sacro, and Monte Caulone, extending westward to the Tuscan sea, in all which vast tract, there was not a single village, or town, which was not either totally destroyed or very much damaged.

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*Glendinning, Printer,
25, Hatton Garden.*